

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE 2-6

WASHINGTON POST
19 October 1984

OBITUARIES

Gerhard P. Van Arkel, 77, Former Counsel of NLRB

By J.Y. Smith
Washington Post Staff Writer

Gerhard P. Van Arkel, 77, who resigned as general counsel of the National Labor Relations Board in 1947 to protest the passage of the Taft-Hartley Act and became a Washington attorney specializing in labor law, died of heart ailments Oct. 8 at Georgetown University Hospital.

After World War II service in the Office of Strategic Services, a predecessor of the Central Intelligence Agency, Mr. Van Arkel was named general counsel of the NLRB, where he had worked before the war.

The Republicans had taken control of Congress in the 1946 elections and one of their goals was strengthen the hand of management against labor. The result was the Taft-Hartley Act. Among other things, it gave the president the power to intervene in strikes where the national interest is involved.

President Truman vetoed the bill, and Mr. Van Arkel helped draft the message explaining this to Capitol Hill. When Congress overrode the veto, Mr. Van Arkel resigned because he believed the effectiveness of the NLRB had been undermined. Truman sent him a message of thanks.

Mr. Van Arkel then went into a law partnership with Henry Kaiser. Among his clients was the International Telegraphers Union. He also represented a number of other labor organizations. Since 1981, he had been of counsel of the firm of Bredhoff & Kaiser.

Mr. Van Arkel's service in the OSS took him to North Africa and Europe, where he worked with Allen Dulles, the head of OSS operations in Switzerland and later a director of the CIA. From 1950 to 1952, Mr. Van Arkel was the counsel of the Senate Committee on the District of Columbia, a part-time position.

In private life, he was a founder of Americans for Democratic Action and a longtime advocate of home rule for the District of Columbia, where he had lived since 1934.

Mr. Van Arkel was born in Des Moines and raised in Haddonfield, N.J. He graduated from Princeton University, where he had a scholarship, and then spent a year traveling in Europe on a fellowship. He received his law degree from Harvard.

In 1934, bored with his job in a Boston law firm where he worked on negligence cases, he moved to Washington and went to work for the Federal Housing Administration. Shortly thereafter he transferred to the NLRB, which was then part of the National Recovery Administration.

When the Supreme Court declared the NRA unconstitutional, Mr. Van Arkel became an attorney with the Securities and Exchange Commission. When the Wagner Labor Act established the NLRB, he returned there.

Mr. Van Arkel's wife, Ruth Bell Van Arkel, died in 1984. Survivors include two brothers, Bernard of Great Meadows, N.J., and John L. of Oceanside, Calif., and a sister, Margaret Lippincott of Haddonfield.